Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation

Strategic Plan 2025, Public

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Executive Summary

The Lafayette Library andLearning Center Foundation("the Foundation") was created to build and support the sustainability of the Lafayette Library as a vibrant regional resource for the benefit of our community, now and for generations to come. While the Foundation fulfills an extremely important role in funding critical library resources, such as additional staff hours, facility maintenance, and facility staff, it also seeks to position itself as a responsive and dynamic organization that can support changing community needs and interests.

The creation and implementation of this Strategic Plan marks an important milestone for the foundation as it expands upon its existing role within the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) and the community it serves.

Mission and Vision

Our Mission

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation raises funds for valuable library resources, offers engaging programming, and fosters community building to amplify the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's visibility, reach, and impact.

Our Vision

We envision the Lafayette Library and Learning Center as a vibrant regional resource that champions lifelong learning, cultivates a welcoming community, and enriches lives now and for generations to come.

What We Do

Since the building's grand opening in November 2009, the Foundation has been responsible for funding over 60% of the annual Library budget, including extended Library hours, Library staff, and facility maintenance. The Lafayette Library and Learning Center thrives thanks to the generous support of individual donors, community partners, corporate sponsors, grants, ticketed public programs, and facility rentals.

Strategic Priorities

Informed by community focusgroups, a community survey, a SWOT analysis, and strategic planning workshops,the strategic planning committee — consisting of staff and the board of trustees — surfaced and determined four strategic priorities for the Strategic Plan.

- **SUPPORT:** Provide clearer messaging about the Foundation to reach current and prospective donors and community members.
- **ENGAGE:** Grow community understanding and engagement with the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's offerings, available resources, and events.
- **SUSTAIN:** Ensure the financial future of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.
- **INNOVATE**: Develop programs and experiences based on community needs to foster more community connections.

With these four strategic priorities, we aim to continue to build support for the library through clearer messaging, engage more community members in the LLLC's offerings, sustain the LLLC, and innovate on programming and experiences that will enrich the community.

This Strategic Plan comes at a time in which the Foundation plans to make shifts in how it has traditionally operated as a fundraising and financing body for the LLLC. This three year plan aims to bring clarity to the existing role of the Foundation in the greater context of the LLLC, and redefine its position in amplifying the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's visibility, reach, and impact.

Introduction

Purpose of StrategicPlan

The goal ofstrategicplanning isto provide a time-bound plan with goals and metrics that carries an organization's work forward. This Strategic Plan is intended to be a guide for the Foundation's work, with a focus on goals to accomplish for the first year.

To use the Strategic Plan, the Foundation should:

Review the Strategic Plan and Revisit Often

It is important that Foundation staff all know where to access the Strategic Plan and have taken the time to read through its content. It will also be important to not do this once, but make coming back to the Strategic Plan and referencing it a consistent part of our organizational work. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan should be introduced to new staff and board members during onboarding.

Check in on Progress

Checking in on progress utilizing the Indicators of Success section of each goal will be critical to achieving goals and aligning with the Foundation’s vision. We will use the quarterly check-in system (see the Monitoring and Evaluation section) to consistently monitor progress toward goals and support program teams and the whole organization in achieving the strategic priorities.

Stay Open to Iterations and Evolution of the Work

Given the nature of how external factors like the economy and political landscape are beyond anyone’s control, adaptiveness will allow the Foundation to make consistent space and time for reflection and make room for the Foundation to make necessary shifts and departures in the work. We will practice having grace for one another in the work, and leave room for others and the work to show up in new ways.

Guiding Principles for the Strategic Plan

ThisStrategic Plan aims toembed fiveinterwovenprinciples: Diverse Representation and Perspectives, Financial Accessibility, Community-Informed Programming, Infrastructure Accessibility, and Belonging and Connection. These principles ensure that our programs and services are reflective of, and responsive to, the communities we serve.

In the context of our work, we, the staff and board of the Foundation see these principles reflected in the following ways:

- There is diverse representation and perspectives in programming and services
- There are financially accessible ways to engage with our programs and services
- The programming is community-driven & inclusive
- There is physical & digital accessibility in our programs and services
- Our programs and services build a sense of belonging and connection

We aim to center diverse voices in the development and delivery of our offerings in order to elevate a range of perspectives that have historically been underrepresented in our work. We are committed to reducing financial barriers so that all individuals, regardless of economic background, can engage meaningfully with our events and offerings. Our programming will be shaped by community input, ensuring that it remains relevant and engaging.

We also recognize that access is not only about cost, but also includes physical and digital accessibility. We strive to be thoughtful and intentional about being inclusive of people with all abilities. Ultimately, our aim is to foster a deep sense of belonging and connection where all people feel seen, valued, and invited to learn, grow, and connect with one another.

For more detail on how these principles can look and feel within the Foundation's work, see Appendix 1.

SWOT Analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses,Opportunities, andThreats (SWOT) analysis serves as a critical lens through which the Foundation evaluates its internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. By strategically aligning priorities with the insights derived from the SWOT analysis, the Foundation can systematically address internal weaknesses, thus ensuring its capacity to confront external threats and seize opportunities.
Through a participatory process in which staff and board members were invited to contribute in-person and virtually, this comprehensive analysis led to the development of our strategic priorities.
Recognizing that there is limited time and resources, strategic priorities help the Foundation identify and address the organization's most pressing concern to focus the work of the Strategic Plan.

For the purposes of this public document, the following aresummary insights of the SWOT analysis:
Strengths: A professional staff, Foundation is a trusted community resource, there is a starting point of substantial annual fundraising.
Weaknesses: Confusion about funding roles of Foundation v. City v. Friends v. County, limited donor cultivation, aging funding agreement between City and Foundation that dates to a time before the new library was open.
Opportunities: Potential for improved city agreements, community engagement, and expanded programming.
Threats: Economic instability, potential funding cuts due to current climate/increased competition for donations.
Upon completion of the SWOT analysis, staff and board discussed and voted on strategic priorities that they felt were pertinent to accomplishing the mission and vision of the Foundation.

Strategic Priorities

Overview

As partof our strategic planning process, participants engaged in a collaborative and participatory approach to identify how expansive we wanted to be in this Strategic Plan. We define expansive as the extent beyond our current capacity and operations. As a group, we decided we wanted to expand beyond our current services and offerings, but move incrementally.

Informed by our community stakeholder report (Appendix 2) and SWOT analysis, we moved through facilitated discussions, voting, and consensus-building where participants prioritized four Strategic Priorities to guide the Foundation's work over the next three years. These priorities, along with their associated Key Activities, reflect a strategic approach to strengthen our impact, deepen community connection, and secure the long-term sustainability of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

PRIORITY AREA 1

SUPPORT: Provide clearer messaging about the Foundation to reach current and prospective donors and community members.

Key Activities

- 1.1 Develop effective communication about the Foundation's contract with the city to ensure clear messaging about how the LLLC is funded and the role of the Foundation to core library services
- 1.2 Enlist professionals to strengthen communication strategy
- 1.3 Diversify communication methods and channels to reach both our existing audience and beyond

PRIORITY AREA 2

ENGAGE: Grow community understanding and engagement with the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's offerings, available resources, and events.

Key Activities

- 2.1 Invest time and resources into increased data collection and analysis efforts to better understand how to reach our community and increase engagement
- 2.2 Create an outreach plan for rentals to attract more organizations to our space
- 2.3 Plan engaging and community-oriented events that bring more community members to our programs

PRIORITY AREA 3

SUSTAIN: Ensure the financial future of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Key Activities

- 3.1 Negotiate the contract with the city to improve terms and lessen the financial load of the Foundation
- 3.2 Build upon the Planned Giving program to create an additional source of funding for the LLLC
- 3.3 Increase board engagement and capacity to support staff in developing the financial sustainability of the Foundation
- 3.4 Grow the Board of Trustees to strengthen the range of expertise and support provided by the board

PRIORITY AREA 4

INNOVATE: Develop programs and experiences based on community needs to foster more community connections.

Key Activities

- 4.1 Develop programming partnerships with other organizations to offer diverse programming to a wider audience
- 4.2 Design the attendee experience (pre, during, post) to foster connections and to adapt and respond to community needs
- 4.3 Gather community members to collect and brainstorm new ideas for programming

Key Activities Prioritization

It is important to prioritize the Key Activities based on critical needs of the organization that will create the Foundations for success of the Strategic Plan. Based on staff and board input, the following seven Key Activities will be prioritized in Year 1 of the Strategic Plan.

- 1.1 Develop effective communication about the Foundation's contract with the city to ensure clear messaging about how the LLLC is funded and the role of the Foundation to core library services
- 1.2 Enlist professionals to strengthen communication strategy
- 2.1 Invest time and resources into increased data collection and analysis efforts to better understand how to reach our community and increase engagement
- 2.2 Create an outreach plan for rentals to attract more organizations to our space
- 3.1 Negotiate the contract with the city to improve terms and lessen the financial load of the Foundation

- 4.1 Develop programming partnerships with other organizations to offer diverse programming to a wider audience
- 4.2 Design the attendee experience (pre, during, post) to foster connections and to adapt and respond to community needs

Of the seven Key Activities, staff and board indicated that the following Key Activities should be addressed first to support the long-term success of the Strategic Plan:

- 1.1 Develop effective communication about the Foundation's contract with the city to ensure our messaging is clear about how the LLLC is funded and the role of the Foundation on core library services
- 1.2 Enlist professional marketing and branding expertise to strengthen our communication strategy
- 3.1 Negotiate with the city on the existing contract to understand terms and lessen the financial load on the Foundation

Year 1 Key Activities Implementation Plan

Overview

The following outlines the implementation plans for the **seven prioritized Key Activities that the Foundation would like to start during the first year of the Strategic Plan**. For each Key Activity, there are indicators of success and potential risks associated with implementation.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

These indicators are meant as guideposts for the Foundation as we embark on implementing each prioritized Key Activity. They should be used as part of monitoring and evaluation to determine if the organization is headed in the right direction with the work.

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS

These are internal or external factors that could challenge the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan or prevent the Foundation from achieving its Strategic Priorities. Through the strategic integration of risk mitigation measures, the Foundation can proactively protect its internal resources, such as human capital and organizational health. The potential risks are segmented into the following categories with these brief summaries:

Relationships: Risk of misunderstandings or misaligned goals.
Operational: Risk of process or resource failures.
Technology: Risk of system or data vulnerabilities.
Strategy: Risk of ineffective strategy; focus on strategy resulting in unintended consequences.
Reputational: Risk to public image or commuity trust.

Timeline for Year 1 and 2 Key Activities

KEY ACTIVITY	Year 1				Year 2	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1.1 Develop effective communication about the Foundation's contract with the city		✓	✓			
1.2 Enlist professional marketing and branding expertise to strengthen our communication strategy		✓	✓			
2.1 Invest resources into data collection/analysis		✓				
2.2 Create outreach plan for rentals		✓				
3.1 Negotiate city contract			✓	✓		
4.1 Develop programming partnerships with other	✓	✓			✓	✓
4.2 Design the attendee experience (pre, during, post)		✓	✓	✓		

Key Activity 1.1

Develop effective communication about the Foundation's contract with the city to ensure our messaging is clear about how the LLLC is funded and the role of the Foundation on core library services

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarter 2-3

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in the number of donors
- Increase in the amount of dollars donated
- More diversified funding sources

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Relationship	Relationship strain with city employees due to misaligned communication efforts.	Involve city representatives early in the messaging process. Ensure staff, board, and donor alignment on communication efforts so

		we are able to stand behind our messaging.

Key Activity 1.2

Enlist professional marketing and branding expertise to strengthen our communication strategy

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarter 2-3

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in the number of new communication methods
- Increase in awareness around the Foundation's financial challenges
- Non-library users are aware of what the Foundation offers
- Diversify groups reached (not just donors and patrons)
- Positive feedback from constituents on communication efforts

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Strategy	Our branding and messaging might not be cohesive with the County Library and Friends.	Hold check-ins to ensure all parties are aware of upcoming branding and messaging to avoid confusion.
Strategy	Relyingon pro-bono services might not yield theresults we desire.	Choose someone or a firm that aligns with our values with a portfolio of work that matches our desired style. Define scope, deliverables, timelines, and quality standards at the beginning in a written agreement. Schedule regular progress check-ins to course-correct if necessary.

Key Activity 2.1

Invest in data collection and data analysis efforts to better understand how to reach our community and increase engagement

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarter 2

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Board and donors understand and can articulate how LLLC is funded
- Reach and engage population we haven't historically met in the past
- Increase in program attendance

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Technology	Collecting personal data may expose the Foundation to legal or ethical issues if not handled properly.	Collect only essential data on secure and trusted platforms that comply with privacy laws.
Relationship	Stakeholders may feel over-surveyed, especially if they don't see how their input leads to change.	Coordinate within the team to ensure data collection efforts are streamlined. Be transparent about the purpose of data collection efforts and whenever appropriate share findings and/or decisions made.

Key Activity 2.2

Create an outreach plan for rentals to attract more organizations to our space

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarter 2

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Increase in revenue earned
- Broader reach to community groups
- Increase in occupancy rate
- Increase number of rental inquiries

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Reputational	Community members mistake renters for being a part of LLLC.	Post clear signage outside the rented room stating that the space is being rented and not directly affiliated with the LLLC.
		Include clear clauses in rental contracts requiring that renters not imply affiliation with the Foundation in their promotional materials.

Key Activity 3.1

Negotiate with the city on the existing contract to understand terms and lessen the financial load on the Foundation

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarter 3

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- A new, documented contractual agreement that establishes clear and justified terms of the Foundation's obligations to the city
- Increase in financial stability for the Foundation
- Decrease in cost demands on the Foundation
- Increase in transparency of cost demands on the Foundation
- Foundation has more control over its annual budget and how funds are spent
- Increase in funds leads to the Foundation being able to support marginalized community needs

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Relationship	Relationship strain with city in renegotiation process.	Ensure there is staff, board, and donor alignment on our stance so we have the backing and support we need.

Key Activity 4.1

Develop programming partnerships with other organizations to offer diverse programming to a wider audience

- TIMELINE: Years 1-2, During Quarters 1-2 of each respective year

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- MOUs with partner organizations are put into place for Foundation programming
- Programs with partner organizations are sustained year over year

OVERVIEW

- Increase in the number of people from different identities (racial, geographic, gender, abilities, age, etc.) coming to our programming and events
- Programming provides access to information and services to marginalized communities

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Reputational	Foundation could be linked to a partner organization's negative actions or perceptions.	Vet partners carefully before any affiliation. Include disclaimers on promotional materials that each organization's views are their own.
Operational	Confusion around distinguishing who is and can be partner organizations versus renters.	Determine as a team the type of organizations we would want to partner with because of shared values and programming opportunities.
Technology	Partners being hacked and compromising Foundation-related data.	Require data security standards in partnership agreements. Limit partner's access to any sensitive data.

Key Activity 4.2

Design the attendee experience (pre, during, post) to foster connections and to adapt and respond to community needs

OVERVIEW

- TIMELINE: Year 1, Quarters 2-4

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS:

- Stakeholders rate programs positively
- Increase in stakeholders finding us through “word-of-mouth”
- Increase in the number of people from different identities coming to events
- Increase in opportunities for attendees to engage and connect with each other
- High likeliness score that attendee would recommend a program to a friend

POTENTIAL RISKS & MITIGATION TACTICS:

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigation
Operational	Trying new or unfamiliar initiatives may require more staff time than expected, potentially leading to delays or deprioritization of other responsibilities.	Roll out new actions and/or ideas incrementally and do a pilot test before trying to scale. Build in buffer time and schedule capacity check-ins to ensure workload feels balanced.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This section provides the key components for assessing progress and tracking accountability. By integrating a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework into our strategic planning process, we commit to a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous learning, fostering an environment where our organizational goals are not only envisioned but systematically evaluated and achieved.

Components

1. Data Collection Methods:

- Select data collection methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, document analysis).
- Establish a data collection schedule.
- Establish data collected in Y1, Q2 as baseline data

2. Check-ins:

Y1, Q3	Y1, Q4
• Review and analyze data collected in the second quarter. • Assess progress toward objectives. • Identify any early challenges or areas for improvement. • Capture learnings and reflections and share with all staff.	• Conduct a year-end review of progress. • Analyze data from Q3 and compare it to baseline values. • Assess the effectiveness of any interventions implemented. • Capture learnings and reflections and share with staff and board. • Revisit Strategic Plan and determine priorities for Year 2.

Y2,Q1	Y2, Q2
• Review data collected from Q4 • Assess the overall progress and impact of organizational initiatives. • Identify any emerging issues or trends. • Modify strategies or actions if required.	• Conduct a mid-year evaluation to assess Year 1 Strategic Plan Key Activities. • Compare end-of-year results to baseline data. • Assess the achievement of objectives and overall impact. • Document lessons learned and successes.

3. Reporting:

- Develop quarterly reports summarizing M&E findings.
- Share reports with relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure transparency and communication regarding progress and challenges.

4. Budget and Resources:

- Allocate resources for M&E activities in the yearly budget.
- Ensure staff training on data collection methods and analysis tools.

Conclusion

Our Strategic Plan marks a significant milestone in our Foundation's journey, reflecting a deep commitment to our mission, our vision for the LLLC, and our community. After more than a decade of serving our local community we are poised to establish ourselves as a regional resource that welcomes people from all identities, experiences, and abilities.

As we embark on this journey, we are guided by a clear vision: to be a vibrant regional resource that champions lifelong learning, cultivates a welcoming community, and enriches lives now and for generations to come. Our Strategic Priorities are carefully crafted by staff and board members incorporating community input to live out our mission to raise funds for valuable library resources, offer engaging programming, and foster community building to amplify the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's visibility, reach, and impact.

Moving forward, our next steps are outlined in the Key Activities which encompass work for the first year of implementing the Strategic Plan. A detailed timeline and responsibilities have been established to guide our efforts and ensure accountability. We recognize that these activities may shift as we begin them, but we will look to them as a guide and roadmap to achieving our objectives.
While working through our Key Activities, we commit to examining our changing demographics to ensure we're meeting our community needs, while also considering how we are best positioned to support marginalized community members. We recognize that this is not a one-time effort, but a practice that we will continue to adapt and finetune in our work.

In closing, we extend our gratitude to all the team members who have contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan in multiple work sessions and discussions. Together, we will shape a brighter tomorrow for the Foundation and the communities we serve.

Appendix 1
StrategicPrinciples

Strategic Principles

Principle 1: Diverse Representation and Perspectives

There is diverse representation and perspectives in programming and services

What It COULD Look Like:

- Speakers and attendees represent a diverse range of abilities, ethnicities, languages, ages, lived experiences, etc.
- Participants come from all over the Bay Area - we are a regional resource.
- Services and programming are available in multiple languages.
- Events showcase different cultural backgrounds and perspectives.
- Multigenerational activities engage people across life stages (youth, parents, young adults, empty-nesters, etc.).
- Programming moves beyond traditional speaker and author talks to include interactive and creative formats (e.g., game nights, discussions).
- Conversations bring together people with diverse viewpoints.

What It COULD Feel Like:

- People feel seen and represented in programming and events.
- The space feels welcoming and inclusive of different backgrounds and ways of engaging.
- Attendees feel excited about the variety of programming and perspectives available.

Principle 2: Financially Accessible Programs and Services

There are financially accessible ways to engage with our programs and services

What It COULD Look Like:

- Cost is not a barrier to participation because the Foundation provides free and discounted programming.
- "Pay it forward" pricing allows people to fund another person's ticket.
- Sponsorships cover program costs to make events widely available to all income levels.
- Free rental spaces are available for community groups locally or beyond.

What It COULD Feel Like:

- No one is excluded due to financial constraints.
- Community members feel supported in their ability to access resources and programming.
- There is a sense of community and shared responsibility in sustaining accessible offerings.

Principle 3: Community Informed Programming and Services

The programming is community-driven & inclusive

What It COULD Look Like:

- Advisory boards of youth, parents, and seniors provide input on programming.
- Community members have multiple opportunities to share feedback and shape offerings.
- Programming includes events that support parents and caregivers.
- Youth voices are actively involved in determining how the Foundation can support them through programs like SWELL.

What It COULD Feel Like:

- Community members feel a sense of ownership and investment in programming.
- Participants recognize that their needs and interests are being heard and addressed.
- Youth, parents, and seniors feel valued as contributors to shaping the space.

Principle 4: Accessibility in Built Infrastructure

There is physical and digital accessibility in our programs and services

What It COULD Look Like:

- Transportation barriers are reduced through partnerships with regional transit services.
- The library and learning center serve as a welcoming community gathering hub.
- Assistive listening devices and sign language interpretation are available at every event.
- Sign language classes are offered to increase accessibility.
- Livestreamed and recorded programs provide flexibility for participation.
- Indoor spaces are available for people to eat, particularly during cold and rainy weather.
- A lending library offers items beyond books and media to support community needs.
- Extended hours, including Sundays to provide greater access to library resources.

What It COULD Feel Like:

- People living with disabilities and other accessibility needs feel fully included.
- Participants experience ease in accessing programs and resources.
- The space feels welcoming and usable for all, regardless of mobility or sensory needs.

Principle 5: Belonging and Connection

Our programs and services build a sense of belonging and connection

What It COULD Look Like:

- People feel comfortable being their authentic selves in our spaces and programs.
- Strong partnerships exist with other Bay Area library foundations.
- Community testimonials are featured to reflect shared experiences on Adlib.
- Programs foster deep connections between attendees through engagement.

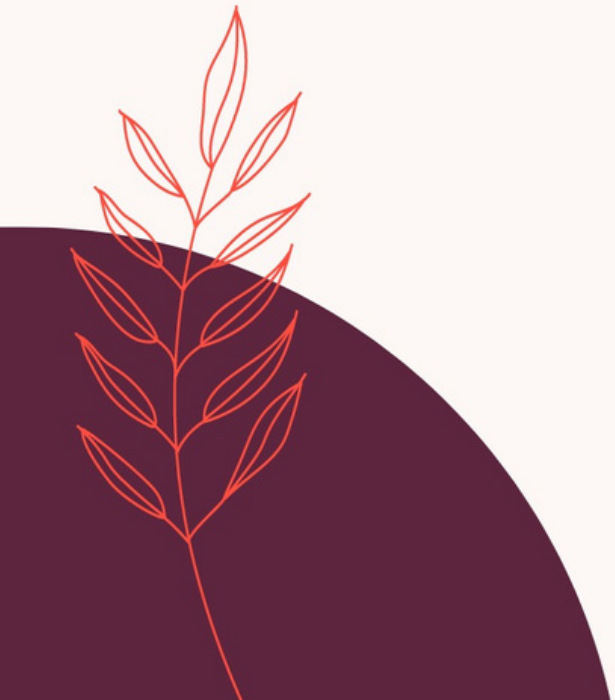
What It COULD Feel Like:

- Participants experience a sense of community and connection.
- People feel welcomed, valued, and included in the space.
- There is a sense of trust and shared purpose among attendees.

Appendix 2
Stakeholders Report

LLLCF Stakeholders Report

Grounding Strategic Planning in Stakeholder Perspectives



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Purpose of the Report

This report provides insights from community members, stakeholders, and LLLCF Board conversations1 facilitated by the Novalia Collective in February and March 2025 to inform the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation's (LLLCF) strategic planning efforts. To maximize the value of this report and leverage the power of collective wisdom and local expertise, the foundation should:

- Consider the report as a resource that provides an authentic representation of the viewpoints and experiences of those living and working in the Lafayette community, and the greater Lamorinda region.
- Account for these insights during strategic planning discussions to better align the foundation's strategic priorities and initiatives with the aspirations and needs of the community members the foundation aims to support
- Use the report as a starting point for ongoing engagement and collaboration with the community to continuously reflect on and refine the foundation's strategic approach and efforts based on new insights and emerging community dynamics

While this report reflects the perspectives of a select group of community members and stakeholders, it offers a diverse and meaningful cross-section of the community voices. It is important to recognize that this report represents an iterative process, serving as a foundation upon which future data and feedback can be built. This report serves as the beginning of an ongoing dialogue and partnership between the foundation and the community, working together to create sustainable and impactful outcomes in Lafayette and beyond.

[1]This report uses the phrase 'community members and stakeholders' and 'stakeholders' at various points. When speaking directly of Lafayette residents, the term 'community members' is used, but when referring to the collective body of residents, donors, and Board, we use the term 'stakeholders.'

How to Approach This Report

The foundation should take the stakeholders' insights into consideration while developing its strategic plan. By doing so, the foundation ensures that its initiatives and programs are community-centric, relevant, and builds trust.

Stakeholder-Centric Approach

By incorporating stakeholders' perspectives into the strategic plan, the foundation adopts a stakeholder-centric approach. This means that the foundation recognizes that the stakeholders themselves are the experts on their own challenges, aspirations, and priorities. By actively listening to and understanding those experiences, the foundation can design services and programs that are tailored to the unique circumstances and contexts of the community.

Relevance and Impact

By aligning the strategic plan with stakeholders' perspectives, the foundation increases the likelihood of its services and programs being relevant and impactful. This ensures the foundation's strategic priorities are focused on initiatives that have the greatest potential for positive change. Taking the stakeholders' perspectives into account allows the foundation to focus on addressing critical issues and making a meaningful difference in the lives of community members.

Trust and Collaboration

Considering the community's perspective fosters trust and collaboration between the foundation and the community. It demonstrates that the foundation values the voices and perspectives of community members, creating a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the outcomes. By actively engaging the community and involving them in the strategic planning process, the foundation can forge stronger partnerships, leverage expertise, and build a foundation of trust that is essential for sustainable community engagement.

Overview of Key Insights

Findings from focus groups, interviews, and a community survey were analyzed to determine key insights for LLLCF to consider during the strategic planning process. They are listed below in no particular order. These areas are further discussed in the Key Insights section of the report.

- **KEY INSIGHT 1:** Expand and diversify community reach for library foundation events and resources
- **KEY INSIGHT 2:** Provide additional and reimagined space at the library and foundation
- **KEY INSIGHT 3:** Develop diverse and engaging programming that supports community building
- **KEY INSIGHT 4:** Adopt different messaging and approaches when building relationships with donors at various levels
- **KEY INSIGHT 5:** Build closer collaborations and relationships with key partners at the Lafayette Library, Contra Costa County Library, Lafayette City Council, and broader community

SECTION 1

Stakeholder Profiles

Stakeholder Identification

Focus group participants consisted of a broad spectrum of community members and other stakeholders, including dedicated individuals who could provide valuable insight into the needs and perspectives of stakeholders and how the foundation may fulfill them. Stakeholders were asked a series of questions which can be found in Appendix 1.

The initial group of stakeholders identified were:

- **Board Members: Members who are currently serving on the board and/or any relevant past members**
- **Lafayette Library Staff: County library staff members**
- **Donors and supporters: Major donors and supporters who are very involved or could be very involved with the foundation**
- **City and County Staff: Current or previous employees or members of city and county offices**
- **Caretakers of children in K-12: Parent/guardians/caretakers and children who frequent or who would like to frequent the library and learning center**
- **General community members who are not engaged/connected to the foundation but are found within the library**
- **Community members ages 21 - 64 without kids who do not engage with the library or foundatio**n

Stakeholder Outreach

The table below demonstrates how weconducted outreach to the intended stakeholder population.

Method	Email directly	Email Blast	Flyers in library	Flyers outside	Tabling at the library
Board Members	x				
Lafayette Library Staff	x				
Donors & Supporters	x				
City and County Staff	x				
Community members found in library		x	x	x	
Community members who don't go to the library				x	x
Caretakers of K-12 students	x	x	x	x	x

Figure 1. Outreach channels for reaching identified stakeholder groups

While we were able to connect with stakeholder groups that were emailed directly and had a personal connection to the library, such as donors, city and county staff members, library staff, and board members, it was challenging to bring community members who were not directly contacted and/or involved with the library. We did the following to try to bring in more community members:

- Distributed flyers at local businesses
- Hung a flyer at the library
- Tabled at the library
- Posted flyers to various listservs and online communities
- Distributed flyers at a foundation program

To account for the three groups that we were not able to conduct focus groups for (community members found in the library; community members who don't go to the library, and; Caretakers of K-12 students) we created a survey that was sent on AdLib, tabled at the library, and conducted 1:1 conversations with two caretakers of K-12 students. Despite not having met our initial intended focus group goal, we believe the focus group conversations along with the supplemental data gathering activities are sufficient to inform the strategic planning process.

The findings from this report were informed by:

- Focus group conversations with board members, library staff, and city and county staff
- Survey results from 49 community members
- 1:1 conversations with community members during tabling at the library, senior SWELL, and while flyering about the focus groups

SECTION 2

Key Insights

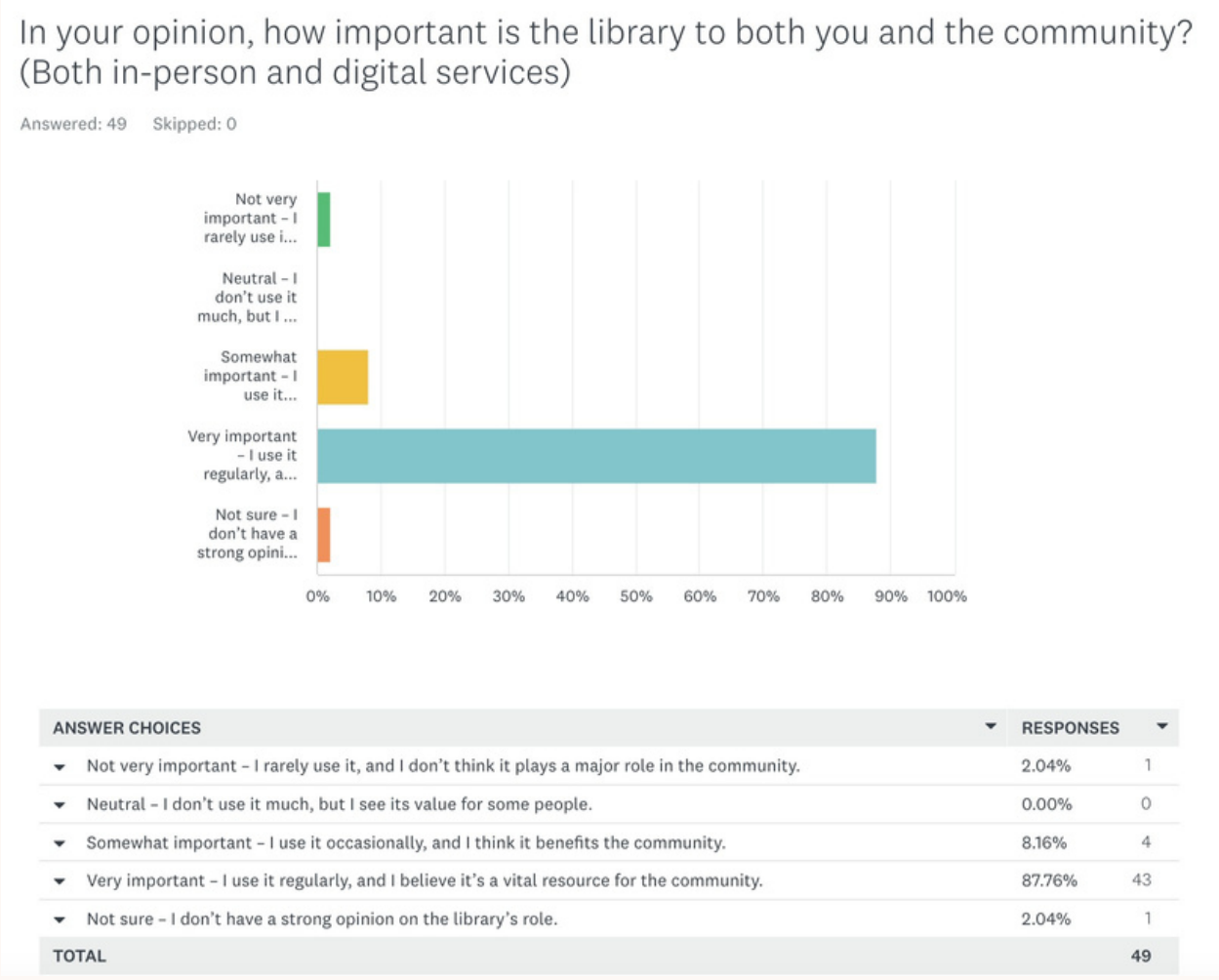
Visions for a Thriving Lafayette

Community members and stakeholders were asked about their vision for a thriving Lafayette community. They shared that a thriving Lafayette was a city where residents were engaged and informed, and interacted with one another. A Lafayette where anyone can feel like they belong and can find a sense of community locally even when the state or country does not provide that. A place where anyone can come and find something they connect or resonate with, with a thriving downtown where anyone can see themselves.

Figure 2. Word cloud depicting words that were commonly used when stakeholders were asked “What does a thriving Lafayette community look like?”

Organizational Strengths

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation's strengths as a foundation were widely recognized and appreciated by participating stakeholders. In a survey with 49 respondents, roughly 88% of respondents selected "Very important - I use it regularly, and I believe it's a vital resource for the community," when asked their opinion on how important the library is to both them and the community (in-person and digital services). Since the role of the foundation is to support the library, community members viewing the library as a vital resource for the community is a positive reflection of the foundation's work.


In your opinion, how important is the library to both you and the community? (Both in-person and digital services)
Answered: 49 Skipped: 0
Not very important – I rarely use i...
Neutral – I don't use it much, but I ...
Somewhat important – I use it...
Very important – I use it regularly, a...
Not sure – I don't have a strong opini...
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
100%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not very important – I rarely use it, and I don't think it plays a major role in the community.	2.04%	1
Neutral – I don't use it much, but I see its value for some people.	0.00%	0
Somewhat important – I use it occasionally, and I think it benefits the community.	8.16%	4
Very important – I use it regularly, and I believe it's a vital resource for the community.	87.76%	43
Not sure – I don't have a strong opinion on the library's role.	2.04%	1
TOTAL		49

Figure 3. Results from a survey of 49 community members on the importance of the library to both themselves and the community.

Participants in the focus groups and interviews shared that because of its excellent programming, LLLCF plays an important role in the community as a central meeting point where people come together to share ideas. Stakeholders shared that the extra programming that LLLCF puts on makes Lafayette a destination library, where people enjoy daytime and evening events, with beautiful indoor and outdoor facilities. People come from across the East Bay and beyond to LLLCF events. LLLCF was also held up as a safe space for honest and constructive dialogue. For example, the Cal Matters discussion allowed community members from a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs to discuss important ballot measures. A civically engaged community was part of many stakeholders' vision of a thriving Lafayette.

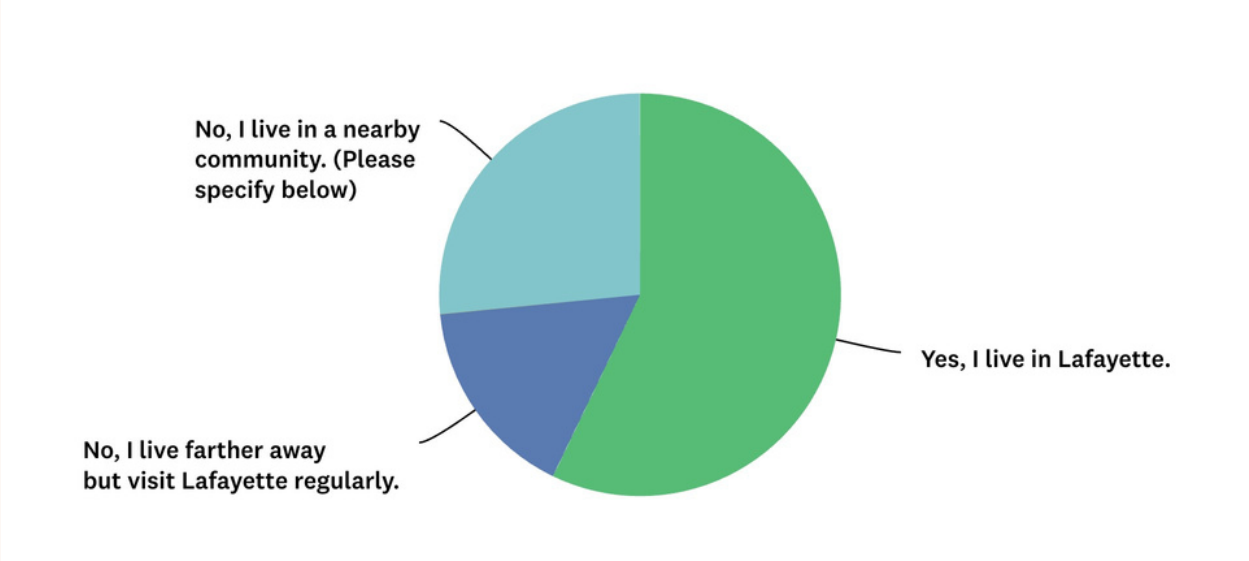

No, I live in a nearby community. (Please specify below)
Yes, I live in Lafayette.
No, I live farther away but visit Lafayette regularly.

Figure 4. Of 49 respondents to a survey, 43% did not live in Lafayette. These respondents either took the survey via a link in the AdLib newsletter or were patrons at the library who took the survey in-person with one of the Novalia Collective consultants.

Stakeholders viewed LLLCF as an organization that serves the intergenerational needs of the community and beyond with its services and offerings, including the SWELL program that serves tweens and teens, as well as seniors. It was noted that the foundation was one of the only places that supports middle school students. Stakeholders viewed SWELL as contributing to the need to support

young people amidst a growing loneliness epidemic. The sponsored storytime also provides enriching programming to attract young families to the library.

Overall, LLLCF is recognized for its role in making Lafayette a destination library for its programs and facilities that meet a variety of community needs.

Stakeholder Insights

Understanding and addressing stakeholders' perspectives will support the foundation in aligning its efforts with the priorities and aspirations of the stakeholders themselves. This approach fosters a sense of collaboration, as it recognizes the community as experts on their own challenges and aspirations. By considering the stakeholder insights, the foundation can develop services and programs tailored to their specific goals, interests, and needs.

Overall, stakeholders provided insights on a range of areas, including expanding the foundation reach to a wider demographic, adding and reimagining the physical space, developing more engaging programming, taking new approaches to engaging donors, and building relationships and collaborative efforts with partners. Below is more information on each of the top five key insights:

KEY INSIGHT 1: Expand and diversify community reach to library foundation events and resources

Stakeholders highlighted that while LLLCF is reaching school age children and the elderly, there is a gap in engagement from the "middle population" of those between the ages of 21 and 64, particularly community members without children or whose children are now adults. Stakeholders believe that foundation services do not currently attract that population and that there is an opportunity to expand and diversify who see themselves as belonging to the foundation community.

Community members also shared that there is a shifting demographic in Lafayette which can be seen in the increase of multiracial families and the population of residents who rent apartments and homes. New residents and families to Lafayette represent an opportunity for the foundation to be known early to community members as a space where they can find resources and build community in their new home. Since LLLCF has not been a space that these groups have come to, community members and stakeholders recommended that LLLCF consider what it means to bring resources to the community where they

are, as opposed to the community coming to the library and learning center. One example given was that the foundation could do pop-up programming in places in the downtown that are empty and in need of more activity. Another suggestion was translating AdLib into more languages, such as Spanish, to help broaden communication reach and build belonging with a diverse group of community members. And while the unhoused population in Lafayette is small, stakeholders mentioned that the foundation could provide services and resources to them.

While many LLLCF staff and board members want the foundation to attract people from the greater Lamorinda and East Bay communities, prioritizing the needs of the Lafayette community will help focus services and programs, while still attracting individuals from surrounding and farther off communities.

STAKEHOLDER STORIES

A community member shared that their family is low income and the library has been an important space for their family. The library has served as a space for them to meet others in the community through author events and the meditation class. They also have a teen son with special needs who struggles to socialize but found the SWELL program to be very helpful for him. The library also allows them to access resources for school projects and is the meeting location for their family in case of emergencies. To her, the library and foundation act as a safety net for her and her family. In addition, this community member believes that the library foundation can increase its resources for community members who would take advantage of it, including offering instrument and tool rentals, and promoting events that attract teens and families.

KEY INSIGHT 2: Provide additional and reimagined space at the library and foundation

Because the library is a safe and welcoming place for people to gather, community members want to use the library to gather together and meet. However, community members noted that space is limited and highly sought after so there isn't enough space for all the groups that need it. Many participants shared that there is no space for people to congregate, talk, and hang out, and activities at the library are solitary unless someone books a free room through the library or rents a room through the foundation. Stakeholders noted that one major challenge to renting a room is that the fees are too high for groups to rent, so they have to find somewhere else to go when they would rather be at LLLC. It was also recommended that the foundation provide a discounted rate for the library to use spaces, such as the amphitheater.

Additionally, there is a desire from the community and stakeholders to reimagine the use of space at the library and learning center, and to add enhancements to make the physical environment more inviting and comfortable for patrons and staff. Some of these enhancements include shade in the outdoor spaces such as the amphitheater so visitors can continue use of them during sunny days, places for remote workers to co-work, sound proofing the library, and adding shades to the upper windows of the library. Community members were also interested in the library creating spaces more conducive to the needs of remote workers. While these enhancements require funds to complete, they reflect authentic needs of community members and stakeholders to improve their experience at the library and learning center. The foundation should consider these enhancements for possible targeted fundraising efforts over the next few years.

KEY INSIGHT 3: Develop diverse and engaging programming that supports community building

In an increasingly divided country, the need for connection and community building came up often in our conversations with stakeholders. They expressed that foundation programming could provide opportunities for people to meet one

another at the library and build community at a local level. Participants shared a desire for programming to move beyond speakers to incorporating more discussion and connection. They wanted to see more programming that engages people and provides opportunities for people to connect, learn about one another, and share ideas. The foundation programming has already proven that it can be a space for honest and constructive dialogue through events such as the Cal Matters ballot discussion, and could develop more events that create an environment for authentic communication and connection. And while racial and ethnic diversity in Lafayette remains relatively low, bringing in racially and ethnically diverse speakers will help community members learn more about experiences outside of their own.

Stakeholders also spoke on how the foundation can continue to diversify programming at the foundation to cover a wider range of topics so that more people could find something that they are interested in to attend. The community survey highlighted that one of the biggest indicators of if someone would go to local programming is if the program is relevant to their interests.

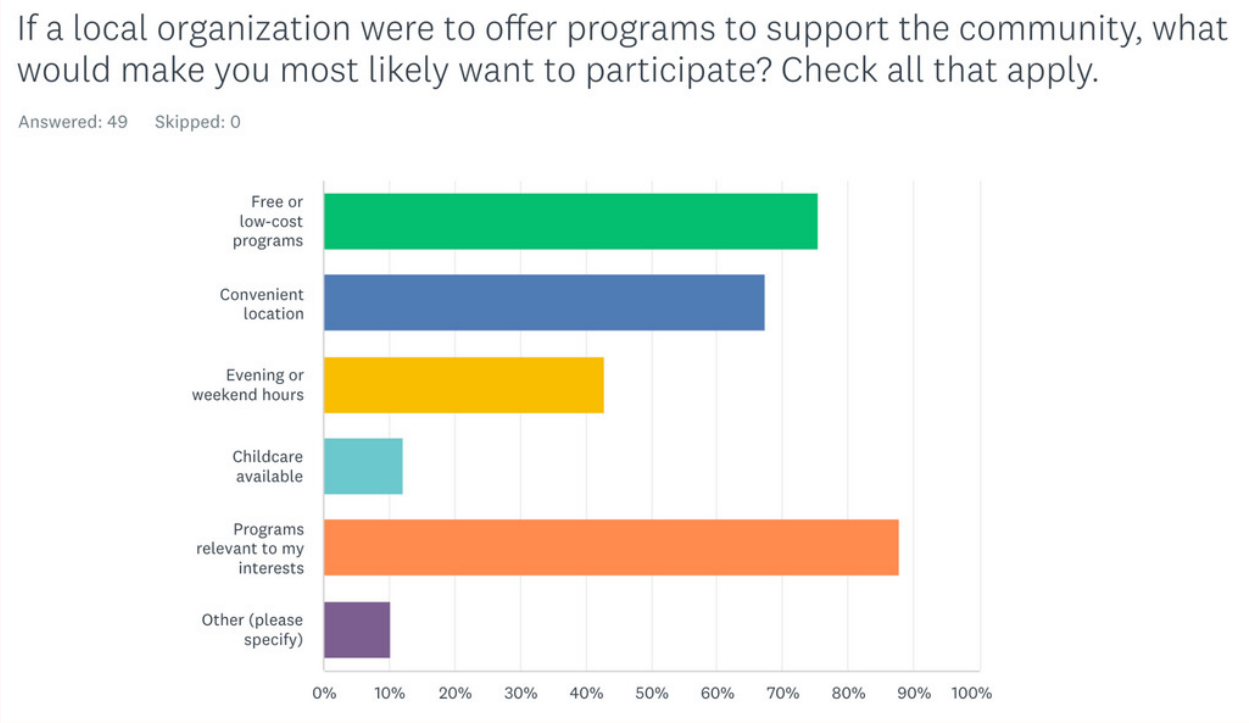


Figure 5. Results from a survey of 49 community members on what would make them most likely to participate in local programming.

Additionally, the survey highlighted that free and low cost events would make community members more likely to attend (See Figure 5). Libraries are one of the only spaces left where anyone can come for free with no expectation of spending money. While charging for events is one way the foundation generates revenue, the pricing should be balanced with the foundation's mission to be a resource for the benefit of the community. If higher fees are creating barriers to engagement and creating a wider base of dedicated patrons who would donate to the foundation.

Stakeholders also shared that there can be more services, classes, and programming for different populations who are not currently served by the foundation. Currently the library has a lot of content, but there is a need in the community for more shared resources. In the survey, community members shared areas in which they would like to see more resources offered by the library, which is a need the foundation could possibly meet (See Figure 6). Suggestions for services, classes, and programming from community members and stakeholders can be found in Appendix 3.

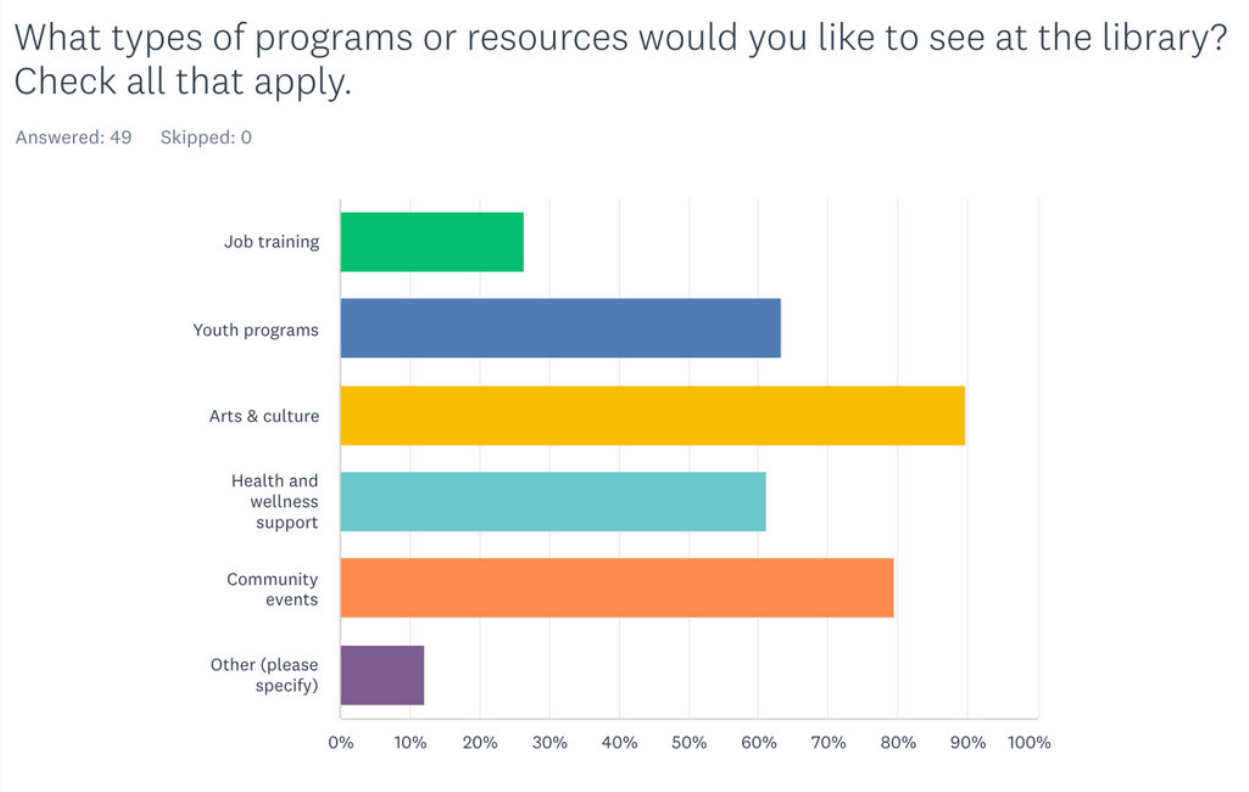


Figure 6. Results from a survey of 49 community members on the types of programs they would want a local organization to offer to support the community.

Donors and board members noted that since Carol joined as Executive Director, there has been an increase in programming and in the diversity of topics and attendees. They shared that Carol has asked people what they wanted from programming, which brought about interactive community experiences like the ballot measure discussion, and the summer series which drew in more than the usual demographics of young children and senior citizens. This is a critical start to understanding this key insight at an operational level. LLLCF should continue deepening its understanding of the diverse interests of the community, particularly of community members highlighted in this report as groups that the foundation should do greater outreach to.

STAKEHOLDER STORIES

A single mother living in Lafayette shared how the library is a core part of how she meets people and builds connection in the community. She has enjoyed the different topics that have been covered at events, and found the owning versus renting topic particularly helpful. She believes that the library can help create opportunities for more groups, such as an affinity group for single mothers, to connect. Her vision is that the foundation can develop programming that revolves around workshops and classes that encourage people to connect. She believes that the foundation could highlight community talents and skills and use that to foster more connections. As someone who works remotely, she wants to see the library space support work from home employees, to combat the mental health challenges that sometimes arise from working from home and not being connected with others.

KEY INSIGHT 4: Adopt different messaging and approaches when building relationships with donors at various levels

LLLCF is responsible for covering approximately 52% of the library's annual budget, including facilities and upgrades. Many focus group and interview participants noted that this is an extraordinary amount to raise each year. Insights from stakeholders illustrated that in order to continue raising this amount, LLLCF will need to adopt different messaging and approaches to build relationships with donors at different levels (e.g. a family foundation versus an individual donor).

While some stakeholders believed that LLLCF needs to distinguish between the library and the foundation, our data showed that the average end user of the library does not distinguish between the two and it is not important for them to distinguish between the two. What the data did highlight as important was helping community members understand that the quality of programs, services, and resources they enjoy at the library and foundation exists because of public

funding. Helping people connect that their giving makes the programs, services, and resources they need and enjoy possible will attract smaller donors who will feel a part of LLLCF's mission and cultivate their understanding and connection to the foundation. The local school district is an example of an entity with a dedicated base of small donors because parents can see where their donations are going.

Stakeholders also acknowledged that there is a disconnect between wealth and giving in Lafayette. Larger donors in the Lafayette community tend to donate to causes outside of the community or ones directly impacting their lives. These donors need different messaging from smaller donors, including language around specific enhancements they can donate to, to help them understand the needs that exist within Lafayette. LLLCF should continue to build relationships with these potential large donors.

Overall, LLLCF should focus on how to expand the population of people who come to the library and be more specific about what people are donating towards. LLLCF should showcase to the community what is made possible with their donations and highlight those stories of impact where community members hear about things (See Figure 6), including LLLCF's own channel, AdLib.

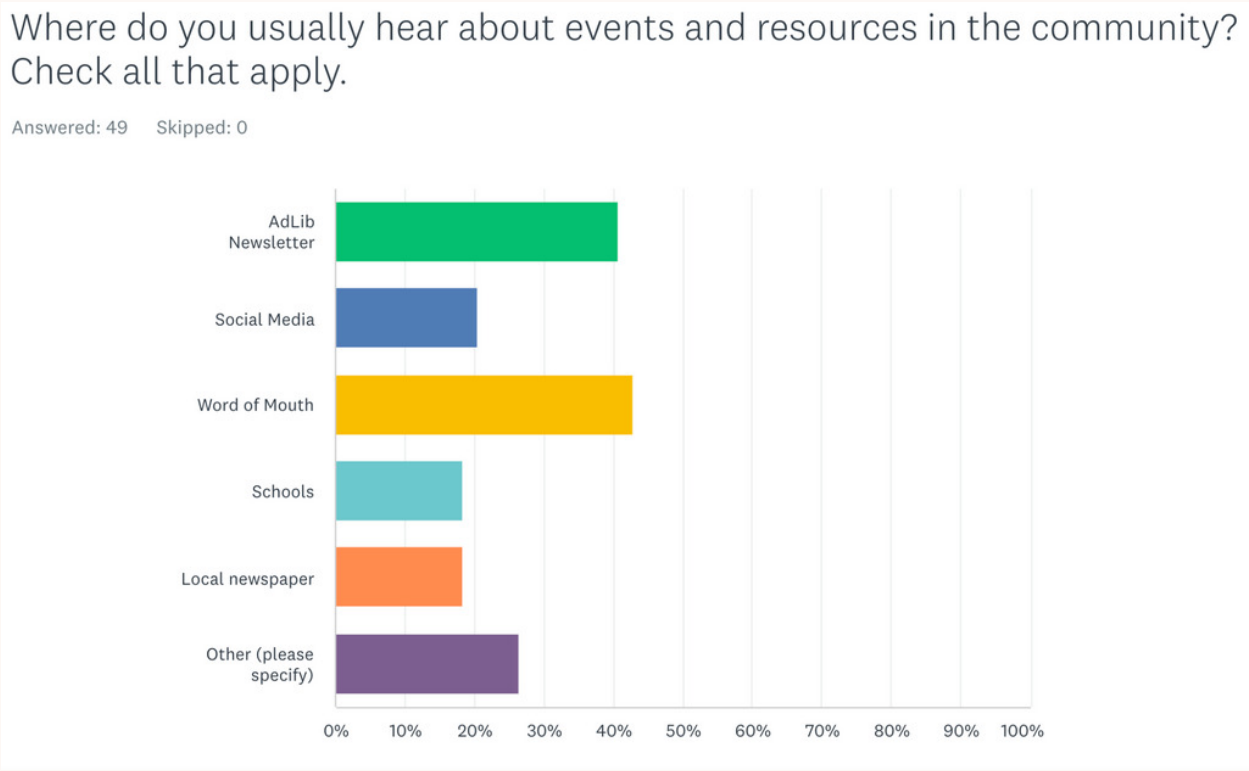


Figure 7. Results from a survey of 49 community members on where they usually hear about events and resources.

Past board members also noted that LLLCF should purposefully engage past board members and involve them more in participating in and supporting fundraising. Past board members shared that they were ready and willing to help LLLCF cultivate more and deeper relationships with potential small and large donors. Some current board members also shared that the board has become more passive over the years and would like to see more involvement in the foundation's work.

Building an audience of dedicated donors, helping people see the immediate results of their donation, and cultivating ongoing relationships, will help the foundation more effectively reach its fundraising goals.

KEY INSIGHT 5: Build closer collaborations and relationships with key partners at the Lafayette Library, Contra Costa County Library, Lafayette City Council, and Broader Community

LLLCF has key partners in accomplishing its work and measuring the success of its strategic priorities. Central to the foundation's mission is to raise funds for the library, support its goals, and historically, foundations have existed to oversee programs and projects that the library cannot. In the past, the foundation and library staff have not had a close relationship, with library staff feeling that the foundation was setting their priorities instead of the foundation supporting the needs of the library. For example, the library depends on the foundation to promote library programming through AdLib and cross promoting the events is critical for attendance. Library staff would like collaboration with the foundation staff to look like an invitation and not an expectation, with library staff being involved in decisions that impact the library space and usage. For example, when the children's deck was being built, there was little collaboration with library staff and the challenges with the design and execution of the deck illustrate the disconnect in foundation and library relations.

There is sentiment at the county library level that not all foundations are supporting the county library's strategic goals. There were several county librarians between 2010 and 2020 which led to a weak relationship between LLLCF and the county, with the county holding the perspective that the foundation did their own thing and the foundation feeling like they were not supported by the county. County staff would like to see the foundation align itself more with the county library's strategic goals and the needs of the library. For example, the foundation's focus on positioning itself as a central gathering place of the community to help build belonging aligns well with the county library's strategic plan. Additionally, there are ways the foundation can meet needs that the library cannot take on, such as supporting the development of library aides. Library aides do not have allocated funding for professional development. Library aides across Contra Costa are the most racially diverse group of employees and are more likely to be from the library community where they work. Investing in library aides

through funds for professional development is an investment in the community, staffing, and a commitment to diversity.

There is currently an ad hoc library commission that analyzed the funding situation of the county library and found that Contra Costa County Library is the lowest funded library system in the Bay Area. This group is considering bringing forward a citizen's initiative to improve funding for the library, which would only require a 51% vote to pass. If this moves forward, Lafayette and the foundation would also benefit from this. There are roughly 30 support groups for libraries to help the poorly funded library system. Stakeholders shared their desire to see these support groups collaborate more and closely align efforts. Working more closely with the county library and the other support groups, and understanding grassroots efforts to improve library funding, should be considered when developing key initiatives for the strategic plan.

Stakeholders would also like to see a stronger relationship between city council and the foundation, with many expressing their wish to see the city take on more responsibility for the library facility. Historically, the city of Lafayette was established as a low tax, low service city since its incorporation in 1968. The city remained frugal while residents did not expect a lot of services. However, the shifting demographics of Lafayette means that incoming families, particularly young families, are moving in with the expectation that the city will provide public services. This shift in community priority was seen in the 2024 elections when Lafayette voters voted yes on Measure K to increase the sales tax by half a cent, which is projected to generate approximately $2.4 million each year for the city.

The foundation has begun to fill a necessary gap in the city in regards to public services, such as public programming, that it can continue to expand upon with a new strategic plan. LLLCF should use its role as a central gathering place for the community to further conversations with city council on how the city and the foundation may better work together on dividing roles and responsibilities to meet community needs.

Finally, the foundation should consider the Lafayette community as its broader partner in its work. Stakeholders recommended having a diverse group of

community advisors including new families, seniors, renters, and students, to advise the library foundation in its initiatives.

Conclusion

This report reflects the diverse perspectivesand voices of community members and stakeholders that provides valuable insights that can significantly impact the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation strategic planning efforts.

As the foundation moves forward, it should embrace this report as a resource that represents community members and stakeholders' viewpoints and experiences. This report should be seen as part of an ongoing partnership and dialogue with the community. As new insights emerge and community dynamics evolve, the foundation should engage in continuous collaboration, using the report as a starting point for further engagement and refinement of its strategic priorities and approach.

As the foundation takes the insights from this report and applies it to the strategic planning process, it has the opportunity to create sustainable and impactful outcomes that address the priorities of the Lafayette community, and positively impact Lamorinda and the greater Bay Area community.

SECTION 5

Appendices

Appendix 1. Focus Group Questions

Questions for Board Members

- Of LLLCF's work, what work are you most proud of?
- What is your perception of the impact the foundation has had on the community?
- Where has the foundation's work fallen short of community needs and how could it evolve to meet those needs? e.g. Who is the foundation not engaging with?
- How would you want the foundation and the library to work together?
- In your opinion, what does a thriving Lafayette look like and what role could
- the foundation play?
- How does the board want to engage with LLLCF staff?
- How would you like to be involved in strategic planning?
  Who would you be most interested in hearing from in the community?

Questions for **Lafayette Library Staff**

- In your opinion, what role does the library play in supporting a thriving Lafayette community
- What is your understanding of what the foundation does?
- How would you like the foundation to support your work at the library?
- Based on your interactions with the Lafayette community at the library, what needs do you see in the community? How do you see the library and foundation meeting those needs?

Questions for Donors and Supporters

- Of LLLCF's work, what has brought the most joy and pride in your involvement?
- In your opinion, what does a thriving Lafayette look like and what role could the foundation play?

- What is your perception of the impact the foundation has had on the community?
- Where has the foundation's work fallen short of community needs and how could it evolve to meet those needs? e.g. who is the foundation not engaging with

Questions for **City and County Staff**

- How have you and your office worked together with the library foundation in the past?
  What worked well about that? What was challenging?
- What does a thriving Lafayette community look like?
- How do you think the foundation could support that?
- How could you see partnership in the future?

Questions for Caretakers of children in K-12

- How has the foundation made an impact on the community?
- What are some needs you see in the community that a community organization like the foundation could provide?
- What would attract more teens and families to the library?
- What kind of programming are you interested

Appendix 2. Community Survey Questions

1. Do you live in Lafayette?
    a. Yes, I live in Lafayette.
    b. No, I live farther away but visit Lafayette regularly.
    c. Prefer not to say.
    d. No, I live in a nearby community. (Please specify below)
2. In your opinion, how important is the library to both you and the community? (Both in-person and digital services)
    a. Not very important – I rarely use it, and I don't think it plays a major role in the community.
    b. Neutral – I don't use it much, but I see its value for some people.
    c. Somewhat important – I use it occasionally, and I think it benefits the community.
    d. Very important – I use it regularly, and I believe it's a vital resource for the community.
    e. Not sure – I don't have a strong opinion on the library's role.
3. What types of programs or resources would you like to see at the library? Check all that apply.
    a. Job training
    b. Youth programs
    c. Arts & culture
    d. Health and wellness support
    e. Community events
4. Have you heard of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Not Sure
5. If a local organization were to offer programs to support the community, what would make you most likely want to participate? Check all that apply.
    a. Free or low-cost programs
    b. Convenient location
    c. Evening or weekend hours

d. Childcare available
e. Programs relevant to my interests
f. Other (please specify)

6. Where do you usually hear about events and resources in the community? Check all that apply.

a. AdLib Newsletter
b. Social Media
c. Word of Mouth
d. Schools
e. Local newspaper
f. Other (please specify)

Appendix 3. Community and Stakeholder Suggestions for Programming

- Music, including an instrument rental program
- Domestic violence and divorce
- Outdoors and hiking (getting outside with others)
- Financial literacy
- SWELL topics more aligned with teen interests
- Gaming events
- Reading challenges with prizes for the youth